Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DANANG 00405 01 OF 02 160212Z

72
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 SR-02 ORM-03 DRC-01 /116 W
---------- 023521
P R 140850Z SEP 74
FM AMCONSUL DANANG
TO AMEMBASS SAIGON PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
SECSTATE WASHDC 0247

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DANANG 0405

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, VS
SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES OF PEOPLE'S ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT
IN MR-1

REF: A. DANANG 393
B. DANANG 396

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: THE SEPTEMBER 8 DEMONSTRATION IN HUE BY THE PEOPLE'S ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT (PACM) HAS GENERATED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST BUT AS YET LITTLE CONCRETE SIGNS OF COOPERATION FROM OTHER POLITICAL GROUPINGS. HUE HAS BEEN QUIET SINCE THE SUNDAY CONFRONTATION, ALTHOUGH PACM CONTINUED ITS ORGANIZING EFFORTS. DANANG OFFICIALDOM IS BRACING, APPARENTLY CONSTRUCTIVELY, FOR A RUMORED VISIT SEPTEMBER 14 FROM PACM LEADER FATHER TRAN HUU THANH AND A POSSIBLE PACM CATHOLIC-REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET DEMONSTRATION SEPTEMBER 15. DANANG BISHOP PHAM NGOC CHI IS TAKING A MODERATE POSITION, OPPOSING DEMONSTRATIONS. HIS DEPUTY, FATHER NGUYEN QUANG XUYEN, WHO IS POSSIBLY MORE INFLUENTIAL POLITICALLY IN CATHOLIC CIRCLES, IS LESS CLEAR-CUT IN HIS OPPOSITION AND MIGHT MAKE LESS THAN A WHOLEHEARTED EFFORT TO DISCORAGE DEMONSTRATIONS IF FATHER THANH ARRIVES AND ATTEMPTS TO ENLIST THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DANANG 00405 01 OF 02 160212Z

SUPPORT OF YOUNGER, MORE ACTIVIST PRIESTS IN SUCH AN EFFORT. IN

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

QUANG NGAI, THE CATHOLIC CLERGY APPEAR TO BE UNDER THE DISCIPLINE
OF THE BISHOP OF
UI NHON WHO REPORTEDLY HAS TAKEN A STRONG STAND
AGAINST DEMONSTRATIONS, AND NONE ARE ANTICIPATED.

2. THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF AN QUANG COOPERATION WITH THE CATHOLIC-
RDV MOVEMENT, ALTHOUGH THE CURRENT VISIT TO MR-1 OF AN QUANG SENATOR
TRAN QUANG THUAN HAS CREATED SOME CONCERN IN DANANG OFFICIAL
CIRCLES THAT THE BUDDHIST NATIONAL RECONCILIATION FORCE MIGHT BE
CONSIDERING DEMONSTRATIONS. PACM DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BROADENED
ITS BASE BEYOND CATHOLIC AND RDV CIRCLES, ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN
ONE REPORT THAT THE CATHOLIC-DOMINATED REPUBLICAN MASSES PARTY AND
THE SMALL VU HONG KHANH VIET-NAM QUOC DAN DANG (VNQDD) MIGHT
PARTICIPATE SHOULD DEMONSTRATIONS OCCUR.

3. SHOULD A DEMONSTRATION BE ATTEMPTED IN DANANG, IT IS
UNLIKELY THAT LARGE NUMBERS WOULD PARTICIPATE, AS PACM APPEARS TO
HAVE ONLY LIMITED SUPPORT AMONG CATHOLICS; AND THE RDV, REPUBLICAN
MASSES, AND VNQDD PARTIES IN DANANG ARE SMALL. THE DANANG
MAYOR INTENDS TO HOLD TIGHT REIN ON THE POLICE AND IF A DEMONSTRATION
IS ATTEMPTED HOPES TO CONTAIN IT WITH "POLITE FIRMNESS." END
SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

4. HUE AFTER THE DEMONSTRATION:
CURRENT ESTIMATES OF THE SIZE OF PEOPLE'S ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT
(PACM) DEMONSTRATION IN HUE SEPTEMBER 8 CONTINUE TO RANGE
FROM 500 TO 2,000, WITH MOST OBSERVERS LEANING TOWARDS THE LOW
SIDE. IN CONVERSATION IN HUE WITH CONGEN ACTING PROVINCE OFFICE
DIRECTOR, FORMER SENATOR HOANG XUAN TUU CLAIMED THAT 10 PERSONS
WERE INJURED BY FIRING OF TEAR GAS. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH
APOD, PROVINCE CHIEF DENIED THAT ANYONE WAS INJURED, BUT SAYS SOME
PERSONS WERE MADE ILL BY THE GAS. SENATOR TUU ALSO CLAIMED (AND
THE PROVINCE CHIEF DENIED) THAT DEMONSTRATORS HAD PERMISSION TO
MARCH. APPARENTLY NO ARRESTS HAVE RESULTED FROM DEMONSTRATION.

5. IN HUE, LETTERS PROTESTING USE OF FORCE TO BREAK UP DEMONSTRA-
TION WERE REPORTEDLY SENT BY LOCAL PACM LEADERS FATHER NGUYEN VAN
LAP AND FATHER NGUYEN KIM BINH TO PROVINCE CHIEF SEPTEMBER 9.
THAT SAME DAY FATHER BINH, IN HIS CHURCH IN PHU CAM PARISH,
ADDRESSED A CATHOLIC YOUTH ASSEMBLY ON "ERADICATION OF CORRUPTION."
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DANANG 00405 01 OF 02 160212Z

THIS MEETING WAS PEACEFUL AND WAS NOT DISTURBED BY AUTHORITIES.

6. MOST POLITICAL FIGURES IDENTIFIED AS PARTICIPATING IN SUNDAY'S
DEMONSTRATION APPEAR TO BE REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET -- REPORTEDLY
PRESENT IN ADDITON TO SENATOR TUU WERE LOWER HOUSE DEPUTIES
NGUYEN VAN KIM, DUONG MINH KINH AND DANG VAN TIEP. RELATIVELY
SMALL TURNOUT OF DEMONSTRATORS SUGGEST ONLY LIMITED SUPPORT AMONG
HUE CATHOLIC POPULATION, EVEN THOUGH DEMONSTRATION ORIGINATED IN

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

PHU CAM PRECINCT, THE CATHOLIC SECTION OF THE CITY, AND WAS LED BY LOCAL PRIESTS.

7. SITUATION IN DANANG:

ON SEPTEMBER 14 DANANG'S MAYOR, COL. DAO TRONG TUONG, TOLD A CONGEN POLITICAL OFFICER THAT HE HAD REPORTS THAT FATHER THANH WAS COMING TO DANANG THAT AFTERNOON TO ORGANIZE DEMONSTRATIONS. (FROM ANOTHER SOURCE, WE HAVE LEARNED THAT THANH MAY BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET FIGURES WHO HELPED ORGANIZE THE HUE DEMONSTRATIONS, INCLUDING FORMER SENATOR HOANG XUAN TUU.) TUONG HAD TAKEN SOUNDINGS EARLIER WITH DANANG BISHOP PHAM NGOC CHI AND THE POLITICALLY ACTIVE VICAR OF THE DIOCESE, FATHER NGUYEN QUANG XUYEN, AND SAID HE HAD CONCLUDED FROM THESE DISCUSSIONS THAT WHILE THEY OPPOSE CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT THEY DO NOT APPROVE OF DEMONSTRATIONS AS A MEANS OF PROTESTING IT. TUONG SAID THAT NONETHLESS SOME CATHOLIC PRIESTS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING XUYEN, AND A SMALL MINORITY OF DANANG'S CATHOLIC POPULATION, PRINCIPALLY NORTHERN REFUGEE ELEMENTS, MIGHT RESPOND TO FATHER THANH'S INITIATIVES. HE ADDED THAT LOCAL REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET POLITICIANS ARE MAKING PLANS FOR PACM DEMONSTRATIONS. HE REGARDS THE RDV AS THE GROUP WHICH GAINED THE MOST BY THE HUE DEMONSTRATIONS.

8. THE MAYOR, WHO HAD A VISIT SEPTEMBER 13 FROM THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR, LE CONG CHAT, IS FOLLOWING THE SITUATION CLOSELY. HE HAS GIVEN STRICT ORDERS TO THE POLICE THAT IN THE EVENT OF DISTURBANCES HE, THE MAYOR, IS TO MAKE THE DECISIONS CONCERNING HOW THEY ARE TO BE CONTAINED. NO TEAR GAS OR FIRING OF WEAPONS BY POLICE WILL BE PERMITTED EXCEPT ON HIS ORDER. WHILE CLEARLY CONCERNED AND UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF DEMONSTRATIONS, THE MAYOR SEEMED CONFIDENT THAT WITH "POLITE FIRMNESS" ON HIS PART VIOLENCE CAN BE AVOIDED. HE IS WILLING TO REGARD WHATEVER CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 DANANG 00405 01 OF 02 160212Z

IS SAID OR DONE ON CATHOLIC PROPERTY (INSIDE CHURCH GROUNDS) AS INTERNAL CHURCH MATTERS, BUT HE WILL NOT PERMIT A CHURCH GATHERING TO ENTER THE PUBLIC STREETS TO MARCH OR DEMONSTRATE. HE HOPES TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN HIS POSITION TO FATHER THANH SHOULD THE PRIEST COME TO DANANG AS RUMORED.

9. TUONG SAID THAT IN THE SHORT TERM HE IS NOT GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE CATHOLIC MOVEMENT, AND HE WANTS HIS POLICE TO REMEMBER THE CATHOLICS IN THAT MOVEMENT ARE NOT "THE ENEMY"--THEY ARE ANTI-COMMUNIST AND OPPOSE WHAT EVERYONE OPPOSES. HE IS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FORMATION OF THE AN QUANG NATIONAL RECONCILIATION FORCE. AN QUANG IS STRONGER, BETTER ORGANIZED, AND MORE OF A THREAT OVER TMK LONISTERM, IN THE MAYOR'S OPINION. HE HAS HAD SOME "INDICATIONS" OF AN QUANG PLANS FOR DEMONSTRATIONS AND IS APPRENTLY ALSO MONITORING LOCAL AN QUANG

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

ACTIVITIES CAREFULLY EVEN AS HE BRACES FOR POSSIBLE CATHOLIC
CONFRONTATIONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 DANANG 00405 02 OF 02 160217Z

72
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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P R 140850Z SEP 74
FM AMCONSUL DANANG
TO AMEMBASS SAIGON PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
SECSTATE WASHDC 0248

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DANANG 0405

10. EARLIER IN THE WEEK DANANG RDV LEADERS, INCLUDING LOCAL CHAIRMAN LE VAN, CONFIRMED TO CONGEN REPRESENTATIVE THAT THEY HAD DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF COOPERATING WITH PACM IN DANANG. THEY SAID THEY HAD PACM'S HUE STATEMENTS AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION AND CLAIMED TO BE PREPARING NEW ACCUSATIONS SPECIFICALLY AIMED AT DANANG PERSONALITIES FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE USE.

11. DANANG CATHOLIC BISHOP CHI IN A CONVERSATION SEPTEMBER 12 WITH A CONGEN REPRESENTATIVE CONVEYED DISTRESS OVER HUE CATHOLICS TAKING TO THE STREETS. CHI SAID HE WOULD NOT COUNTENANCE SUCH A DEMONSTRATION IN HIS DIOCESE AND SAID IF ONE WERE ORGANIZED HE WOULD COUNSEL HIS COMMUNICANTS NOT TO PARTICIPATE. WHILE OPPOSING CORRUPTION, CHI SAID HE OBJECTED TO PERSONAL ATTACKS ON THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER. THE BISHOP SAID HE KNEW OF NO PLANS, HOWEVER, FOR DEMONSTRATIONS IN DANANG. (COMMENT: WHILE CHI SEEMED SINCERELY OPPOSED TO DEMONSTRATIONS, HIS POWER TO INFLUENCE HIS FLOCK IN POLITICAL MATTERS IS SOMEWHAT LIMITED BECAUSE AS A NORTHERNER HE IS AN OUTSIDER IN CENTRAL VIET NAM AND HAS LEFT THE POLITICAL ARENA LARGELY TO HIS CENTRAL VIETNAMESE

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

DEPUTY, FATHER XUYEN. END COMMENT)

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 DANANG 00405 02 OF 02 160217Z

12. IN A SEPARATE SEPTEMBER 12 CONVERSATION WITH A CONGEN REP, FATHER XUYEN SEEMED SLIGHTLY MORE POSITIVE ABOUT PACM THAN HIS BISHOP, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT ADMIT TO PARTICIPATION IN PACM. FATHER XUYEN SAID THE PRESENT QUIET WAS SIMILAR TO THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM, AND CLAIMED THAT 5,000 PERSONS HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE HUE DEMONSTRATION. HE SAID THAT DEMONSTRATIONS IN DANANG WERE UNLIKELY AS THE PEOPLE ARE TOO HUNGRY TO BE POLITICALLY ACTIVE. (COMMENT: FATHER XUYEN, A SIGNER OF THE ANTI-CORRUPTION DECLARATION OF THE 301 PRIESTS, IS WIDELY BELIEVED IN DANANG TO INDULGE IN CORRUPTION IN CONNECTION WITH HIS CARITAS AND OTHER DANANG CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES.AN ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT LED BY FATHER XUYEN WOULD SUFFER FROM A CREDIBILITY GAP. END COMMENT)

13. QUANG NGAI QUIET:

IN QUANG NGAI, THE CONGEN PROVINCE OFFICE DIRECTOR WAS TOLD BY THE PROVINCE POLICE CHIEF THAT FATHER THANH HAD VISITED QUANG NGAI THREE WEEKS AGO ON AN APPARENTLY UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO DRUM UP SUPPORT FOR THE PACM. THE POLICE CHIEF SAID THAT THE QUI NHON BISHOP, WHO HAS JURISDICTION OVER QUANG NGAI, SUBSEQUENTLY VISITED THAT PROVINCE TO DISCOURAGE PRIESTLY PARTICIPATION IN PACM. THE SENIOR PRIEST IN QUANG NGAI CONFIRMED THAT THE QUI NHON BISHOP OPPOSED HIS PRIESTS PARTICIPATING IN PACM, SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY DID NOT SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT, AND THAT ONLY 3 OF HIS 15 PRIESTS DID. HE SAID HE HAS FORBIDDEN HIS PRIESTS TO PARTICIPATE IN PACM AND SAID THERE IS NO DACSER OF A DEMONSTRATION IN QUANG NGAI.

14. AN QUANG ABSTAINING:

THE POLITICALLY ACTIVE AN QUANG BUDDHISTS IN MR-1 HAVE AS YET SHOWN LITTLE INCLINATION TO COOPERATE ACTIVELY WITH PACM. IN HUE, THICH THANH TRI TOLD CONGEN REPS THIS WEEK THAT HE IS REMAINING NEUTRAL, AS HE HAD RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATING. THICH NHU HAI IN QUANG NGAI TOLD THE CONGEN POD THAT WHILE HE AGREES WITH THE NEED TO FIGHT CORRUPTION, THE CATHOLICS ARE GOING ABOUT IT WRONGLY, AND THAT STREET DEMONSTRATIONS WILL ONLY LEAD TO TROUBLE. AN QUANG SENATOR TRAN QUANG THUAN, ON A SWING THROUGH MR-1 TO SOUND OUT BUDDHIST OPINION ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, A TRIP WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE DANANG CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DANANG 00405 02 OF 02 160217Z

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

MAYOR'S CONCERNS ABOUT AN QUANG INTENTIONS, TOLD POLITICAL OFFICERS THAT AN QUANG HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN THE SEPTEMBER 8 DEMONSTRATIONS IN HUE, BUT NEITHER REJECTED NOT ADMITTED THE POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE COOPERATION WITH PACM. SENATOR THUAN COMMENTED ALSO THAT THE PACM WAS A GOOD MOVE FOR THE CATHOLICS WHO NEEDED TO CHANGE THEIR FOREIGN-ORIENTED, PRO-GOVERNMENT IMAGE AND DISSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM THE PRESENT CATHOLIC-LED CORRUPT GOVERNMENT.
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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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